

Quit During the Great American Smokeout

USA Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

Are you a tobacco user? Are you tired of wasting money on cigarettes? Are you worried about what cigarette smoke is doing to health or the health of your children? Are you ready to quit? Then the Great American Smokeout on November 19 is for you!

Each November, you and thousands of other Americans can say, "So long, Tobacco Road" and "Hello, healthier life" during the nation's biggest freedom-from-tobacco event.

Each year, more than 400,000 Americans die from cigarette smoking. In fact, one in every five deaths in the United States is related to smoking. Smoking tobacco causes chronic lung disease, heart disease and stroke, as well as cancer of the lungs, larynx, esophagus, mouth and bladder.

These long-term risks of tobacco use are deadly serious. But did you know that tobacco damages your health from the first puff? For example, the nicotine in tobacco reduces blood flow to the muscles, therefore increasing the risk for injuries and slowing the healing process. This has a definite impact on fitness. Nicotine also lowers the level of testosterone in the blood and can lead to impotence for men. Tobacco reduces night vision, which can be a serious problem for Soldiers.

If you want to quit using tobacco, ask your healthcare provider to recommend a local tobacco-cessation program. Studies have shown that participation in a structured program significantly improves the chance for success. If you can't get into a program right away, use the following steps to get started.

Step One: Pick a quit date. The Great American Smokeout is a great day to quit. Mark November 19 on your calendar. Write a list of reasons you want to quit using tobacco and get yourself ready to break free from tobacco addiction.

Step Two: Establish a tobacco-free zone. Throw away ALL cigarettes, matches, lighters and chew. Clean and deodorize your house, car and clothing. Get rid of the ashtrays in your house and pick up cigarette butts in and around your yard. Ask your friends and family NOT to smoke in your house, in your car or around you for at least three weeks.

Step Three: Avoid situations that lead to tobacco use. Think about those times that you use tobacco. Is it during break time at work? While driving? When talking on the phone? At a bar? If you can, avoid those places or situations for a few months. Of course, there are some places you can't avoid, such as driving your car. In those situations, substitute a new, enjoyable behavior for smoking. For example, instead of lighting up when driving, have a lollipop. When talking on the phone, keep your hands busy by doodling on a piece of paper. During break time, take a walk around the building, bring in a favorite magazine to read or listen to the radio.

Step Four: Take care of yourself. Enjoy your meals. Sharper taste and smell will be early, noticeable benefits of your freedom from tobacco. Calculate how much money you're saving and buy something for yourself.

Use the 5 Ds to help with urges:

Deep Breathing – Take slow, deep breaths to feel relaxed and in control.

Drink Water – Drink at least 8 glasses a day to flush the nicotine from your system.

Do something else to keep busy. Be physically active. Chew sugar-free gum. Listen to music.

Discuss your urge with a friend or family member.

Delay - Don't reach for tobacco right away. Count from 100 to 200. Think pleasant thoughts. The urge to smoke passes in 3 to 5 minutes whether a person smokes or not.

The Great American Smokeout on November 19 is a great time to quit tobacco and begin to enjoy all the benefits of saying "So long, Tobacco Road." For more information about tobacco cessation, visit:

<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/subsite/greatamericans/Smokeout.asp>

<http://www.ucanquit2.org/>

<http://chppm->

www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Population/GreatAmericanSmokeoutResourceArchive.aspx